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Heroes of the Nations

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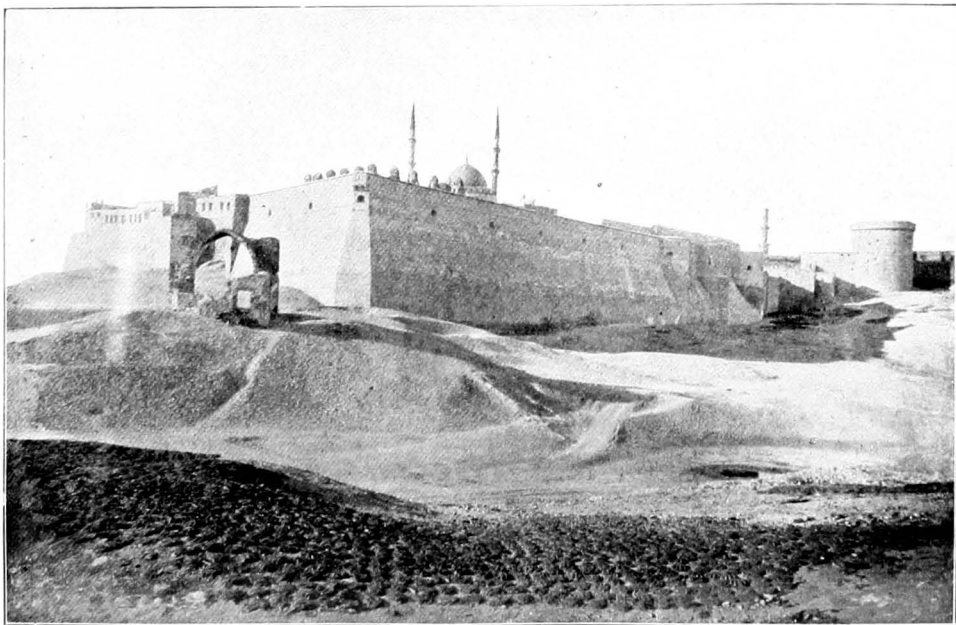
Evelyn Abbott, M.A.

FELLOW OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD

FACTA DUCIS VIVUNT, OPEROSAEQUE
GLORIA RERUM.—OVID, IN LIVIAM, 888.

THE HERO'S DEEDS AND HARD-WON
FAME SHALL LIVE.

SALADIN



THE CITADEL OF CAIRO, EAST ANGLE.

Frontispiece.

SALADIN

AND THE FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM

BY

STANLEY LANE-POOLE, M.A.

AUTHOR OF THE "LIFE OF STRATFORD CANNING," "THE ART OF THE SARACENS"
"CAIRO," "STUDIES IN A MOSQUE," "THE MOORS IN SPAIN"
"TURKEY," "THE BARBARY CORSAIRS" ETC.

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PREFACE.

SALADIN is one of the few Oriental Personages who need no introduction to English readers.

Sir Walter Scott has performed that friendly office with the warmth and insight of appreciative genius. It was Saladin's good fortune to attract the notice not only of the great romancer, but also of King Richard, and to this accident he partly owes the result that, instead of remaining a dry historical expression, under the Arabic style of "*el-Melik en-Nasir Salah-ed-din Yusuf ibn Ayyub*," he has become, by the abbreviated name of "Saladin," that familiar and amiable companion which is called a household word. The idea, it is true, is vague and romantic. The *Talisman* has given us a noble portrait of the Sultan whose chivalry and generosity excited the admiration of the Crusaders, but the reader is left in uncertainty as to the history and achievements of the hero, and what he is told in those fascinating pages is not always strictly authentic. On the historical relation of the novel to which Saladin owes so much of his fame something is said at the end of this book. The present biography, the first that has been writ-

ten in English, aspires to fill in, from contemporary sources, the details of the picture.

It is singular that, so far as English literature is concerned, the character and history of Saladin should have been suffered to remain where Scott left them seventy years ago, and that no complete Life of the celebrated adversary of Richard Cœur de Lion should have been written in our language. The materials are abundant, even exhaustive, so far as eastern scholars understood biography. We must not expect the personal details which delight the student of "interviews": there were no illustrated papers in Saladin's time. But for the essential facts of his life and the qualities of his nature we have the best possible evidence, rich in extent and faithful in detail. The writers of the two chief Arabic records had excellent opportunities of ascertaining the truth, and both were men of learning and high character. Baha-ed-din, who was only seven years younger than Saladin, though he survived him by forty, was an Arab of the celebrated tribe of Asad, born at Mosil on the Tigris in 1145. He went through the arduous course of study by which Moslems in those days qualified themselves for the judicial office of Kady. In the famous Nizamiya college at Baghdad, founded by the great Vezir Nizam-el-mulk, the friend and schoolfellow of the astronomer-poet Omar Khayyam, Baha-ed-din attended the lectures of the most distinguished professors of the day, men who had wandered, like our own medieval scholars, from university to university, from Spanish Cordova to Tatar Samarkand, teaching and learning as they went. He

became a professor himself at his native city of Mosil, and his wisdom and judgment so commended him to the Atabeg or ruler of Mesopotamia that he chose him repeatedly to be his ambassador in grave political emergencies.

Baha-ed-din was at Mosil when Saladin twice laid siege to it in 1182 and 1185; he went on an embassy to Damascus in 1184, when Saladin was so much impressed by his ability that he offered him a judgeship, which was loyally declined by the envoy; but they met again at Harran in the spring of 1186, when Baha-ed-din assisted in drawing up a treaty of peace between his sovereign and Saladin. After making the pilgrimage to Mekka, and to Jerusalem, then newly recovered from the Christians, he visited the Sultan once more, and from that time forth he seldom left his side. Entering his service on 28th June, 1188, he was present throughout his subsequent campaigns, witnessed the siege of Acre from the beginning to the end, accompanied him as he harassed Richard's march down the coast, took a prominent part in the engagements at Jaffa in 1192, and was at Saladin's bedside during his fatal illness. After the Sultan's death, he accepted the high dignity of judge of Aleppo, and there he devoted his zeal and his savings to founding colleges and training doctors to be learned in the law. One of his pupils has left a touching description of the venerable Kady, as he knew him, when a heated alcove and heavy furs could not warm the chilled blood of 85; but the old scholar still loved to teach the students who came to him after Friday prayers, when he could no longer

go to the mosque, and when even in his private devotions he could scarcely keep his feet. "He drooped like an unfledged bird for weakness," says his biographer, and in 1234 he died, twoscore years after the events he related in his Life of his master.

For the last five years of Saladin's career, Baha-ed-din is an incomparable authority, an eye-witness of what passed, and an intimate friend and counsellor of the Sultan. For the earlier periods he is less accurate and much less detailed; but even here he is able to record several important transactions at first hand, and his familiar intercourse with Saladin and his officers and kinsmen must have supplied him with much of his information. He writes, it is true, as an avowed panegyrist, but though in his eyes the King can do no wrong, he is so frank and guileless in his narrative, and so obviously writes exactly what he saw and thought, that the biography has not suffered by the writer's hero-worship. It bears the unmistakable stamp of truth, and its personal bias and oriental hyperbolism are easily discounted. As our sole first-hand witness to the negotiations between Richard I. and Saladin, Baha-ed-din's simple veracity is especially a quality of importance.

If Baha-ed-din is an avowed hero-worshipper, in the other prime authority we find a useful corrective to undue admiration. Ibn-el-Athir had every political reason to decry the supplanter of his local lords, and his annals contain criticism of Saladin's generalship and one or two graver accusations. Ibn-el-Athir, who was also an Arab, of the tribe of Sheyban, was fifteen years younger than Baha-ed-din, and was born in 1160

at Jezirat-ibn-Omar on the Tigris, over which city his father was Waly or prefect. The historian spent most of his life in laborious study at Mosil, where his brother was a distinguished councillor of the Atabeg who ruled Mesopotamia. Another brother held a post in Saladin's chancery. Ibn-el-Athir, like Baha-ed-din, was present when Saladin besieged Mosil in 1185, and he accompanied the contingent which the Mesopotamian princes afterwards sent to join the Sultan's army in his north Syrian campaign of 1188; he was also a traveller, and in his journeys to Damascus, Jerusalem, and Aleppo, he had means of verifying his information. His *History of the Atabegs of Mosil*, completed in 1211, is as much a panegyric as Baha-ed-din's biography of Saladin, but it is a panegyric of Saladin's enemies; its author can never forgive him for supplanting the dynasty of the Atabegs in Syria, and making even the great lord of Mosil his vassal. Thus, if anything can be urged in disparagement of Saladin, we may be sure that Ibn-el-Athir will not pass it over. Yet, with this natural bias in favour of his family's old masters and benefactors, he is not usually unfair. He recognises Saladin's great services to Islam, and in his later work, the *Kamil*, or *Perfection of History*, which is brought up to within three years of his death in 1233, he shows a more impartial spirit than in his special eulogy of the Atabegs of Mosil.

These two historians must be the prime authorities for a Life of Saladin; but there are others of great value for particular portions or aspects of his career. Of these Imad-ed-din of Ispahan, generally

known as el-Katib, "the Scribe," Saladin's chief secretary or chancellor for the Syrian provinces, is of the first importance; but unfortunately only a small part of his work has been printed. He was with his master at the siege of Acre, and his writings, despite their intolerable rhetoric, have the merit of first-hand documents. The *Autobiography* of Osama, an Arab prince and poet, of the castle of Sheyzar on the Orontes, who witnessed the greater part of the Crusading period from his birth in 1095 to his death in 1188, presents a vivid picture of the times; but although in his old age he lived for some years at Damascus in frequent intercourse with Saladin, his reminiscences in this regard are disappointing: the old Arab was too full of himself to give much space to the sayings and doings of others. Ibn-Khallikan, the assiduous biographer of eminent men, and Abu-Shama, the author of *The Two Gardens*, were neither of them contemporaries; but both knew people who knew Saladin, and their writings sometimes supply what was missing, or amplify what was meagre, in the contemporary records.

Among the Christian chroniclers we are fortunate in the presence in Palestine of the incomparable Archbishop William of Tyre, whose *Historia*, far transcending in vividness, grasp and learning all Latin or Arabic annals of the time, deals with the events in the East from 1144 to 1183 from personal knowledge. The Archbishop left no successor of his own calibre, and that he should not have lived to carry his history ten years further, to the end of the Third Crusade, is a loss which every student of the period,

and not least the biographer of Saladin, must lament. The various continuators of his work cannot lay claim to his great qualities as an historian, but their merits are not to be undervalued, and the *Chronicle* of Ernoul in particular supplies valuable contemporary evidence. Ernoul was squire to Balian of Ibelin, who played a prominent part in the Holy War and was frequently in personal relations with Saladin; and the squire doubtless attended his master to the memorable field of Hittin and afterwards in the defence of Jerusalem. Ernoul's narrative, which is full of vivid personal touches, is thus extremely valuable as representing the Christian side of events which the Arabic writers describe from a Mohammedan point of view. It is also useful, in a less degree, in checking the exuberant Ricardolatry of the *Itinerarium Regis Ricardi*, which forms our fullest authority for the Third Crusade, and, despite its exaggerations and party spirit, is a marvellously graphic recital of the achievements of the English hero.

These then are the chief sources from which the present Life of Saladin is drawn. They are nearly all contemporary, and a large part of the story is told by actual eye-witnesses, whilst in no instance has an authority been relied upon who was more than one generation removed from the events he relates. References to these sources are given when a statement seemed to require authentication, and in the later chapters, when it is important to distinguish the testimony of Christian from that of Moslem witnesses, such footnotes are frequent; but in the earlier

part, where nearly everything rests upon the authority of Ibn-el-Athir and Baha-ed-din, references are given only when there is a serious discrepancy between the two. In an historical study founded upon original research such verification is, of course, essential; but where none is given, some confidence, it is hoped, will be placed in the biographer. There is not a line in this volume that cannot be substantiated by practically contemporary evidence.

It has been remarked as strange that such abundant materials should not long ago have been utilised in an exhaustive Life of Saladin, but it would not be fair to ignore the admirable labours of M. Marin, "un écrivain aussi connu par la douceur de ses mœurs que par l'étendue de ses lumières et l'élégance de sa plume." M. Louis-François-Claude Marin was born in Provence, where he eventually held the posts of Censeur Royal et de la police, and Secrétaire général de la Librairie et des Académies de Marseille et Nancy. In 1758 he published in two charmingly printed duodecimo volumes an *Histoire de Saladin, Sulthan d'Egypte et de Syrie* (Paris, chez Tilliard, Libraire, Quai des Augustins, à l'Image Saint Benôit). The book appears to be almost unknown, or it would surely have found a translator. At once scholarly, philosophic, and written with that light touch by which the French, preëminently, are able to carry off the ponderous effect of real learning, M. Marin's biography has only to be read to be admired. He made a full use of the Crusading chronicles, and of Schultens' edition of Baha-ed-din, and he consulted Ibn-el-Athir's *Atabegs* in an Arabic

manuscript at Paris. So far as his contemporary materials go, he is excellent; but he relied overmuch on later writers, and on unequal though learned compilations such as Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*; and of course a great deal has been discovered and published since his time. Still, considering his necessary limitations, he achieved a remarkable success, and the only serious fault to be found with his manner of dealing with such authorities as he was able to use is a tendency to read more "between the lines" than the text really justifies. M. Marin employed what is called "the historical imagination" over freely, and despite his frequent references to original sources one can detect a personal equation which has to be eliminated. It is much more interesting to give oneself a free hand in writing history, but the temptation must be subdued and the letter of the text must be respected.

Some authors, in treating of the history of Mesopotamia, have thought it necessary to prepare their readers by beginning at the Flood. M. Marin considered that his Life of Saladin demanded an introduction which went back to Mohammed and the first preaching of Islam. I have not tried the patience of the reader quite so severely, but without some account of the course of history in western Asia during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the political situation in which Saladin began his career would be unintelligible. Especially important is the position achieved by his great forerunner, Zengy, the conqueror of Edessa, whose unfulfilled ambitions prepared the way for the imperial realisations of

Saladin. The introductory chapters, however, have been reduced to as small a compass as possible.

Oriental names are naturally a stumbling-block to western readers, and the use of accents, long marks, dots, and the like, does not seem to be of much assistance to the unlearned. In the present work, therefore, the names are written as simply as possible, and the reader is only asked to pronounce the vowels after the Italian manner. Those who are curious as to the more precise transliteration will consult the index, where every name is furnished with the proper accents and distinguishing marks, and can be at once converted by the scholar into the Arabic character. In the text, the article *el* is generally omitted before the well-known names of towns, such as el-Mosil, er-Ramla, and western names are given when familiar, as in the case of Edessa (for er-Ruha), Aleppo (for Halab), and Cairo (for el-Kahira). When a town has two names, one used by the Arabs, the other by the "Franks" or Crusaders, both are given on its first occurrence, and Crusading names are retained so long as the place remained in the hands of the Crusaders.

Tables of contemporary sovereigns and princes in western Asia, of Saladin's family, and of the chief Crusading houses, will help the reader to understand the political situation. The maps are based upon the "Survey of Western Palestine," Thuillier and Rey's "North Syria," and the Arab geographers. Much assistance has been derived from Mr. Guy Le Strange's valuable work on *Palestine under the Moslems*; the notes contributed by Gen.

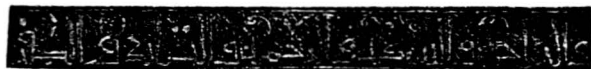
Sir Charles Wilson and Lieut.-Col. Conder, R.E., to the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society's translation of Baha-ed-din have been consulted; but the text of that work, not being directly translated from the Arabic, has not been cited. The author is specially indebted to Mr. T. A. Archer, not only for ready help in any difficulty that arose in connexion with the Crusading chronicles, but also for permission to quote his translation of parts of the *Itinerary of King Richard*, originally published in his fascinating little book, *The Crusade of Richard I.*, in the series of "English History from Contemporary Writers," edited by Professor York Powell. His thanks are also due to Mr. E. B. Knobel, late President of the Royal Astronomical Society, for kindly investigating the chronology of the eclipses recorded in the course of Saladin's campaigns, and to the editor of the *Quarterly Review* for permission to reprint part of an article on "The Age of Saladin."

M. Paul Casanova has kindly permitted the reproduction of three of the photographs which illustrate his valuable *Histoire et description de la Citadelle du Caire*; to Dr. F. J. Mackinnon is due the illustration of the tomb of Saladin at Damascus, as restored in Ottoman times. The author is also obliged to the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects for the use of two views of the Omayyad Mosque of Damascus, before the fire, from sketches by Mr. R. Phenè Spiers, F.S.A.

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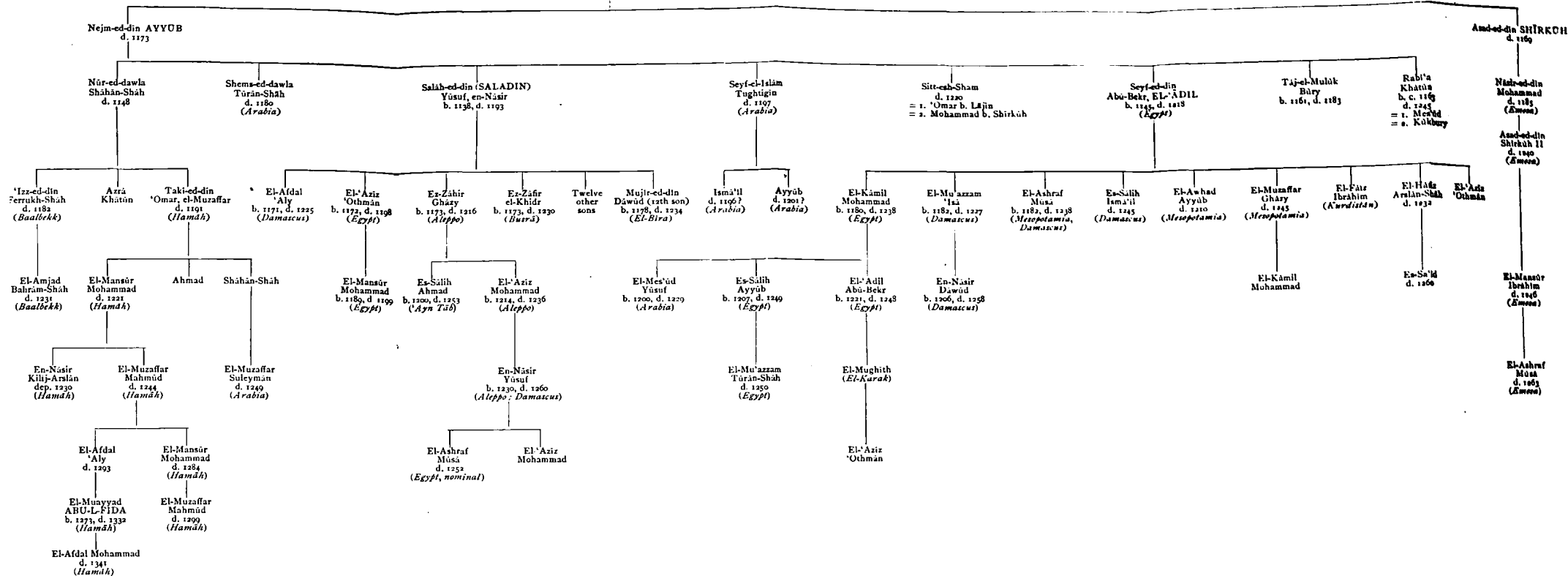


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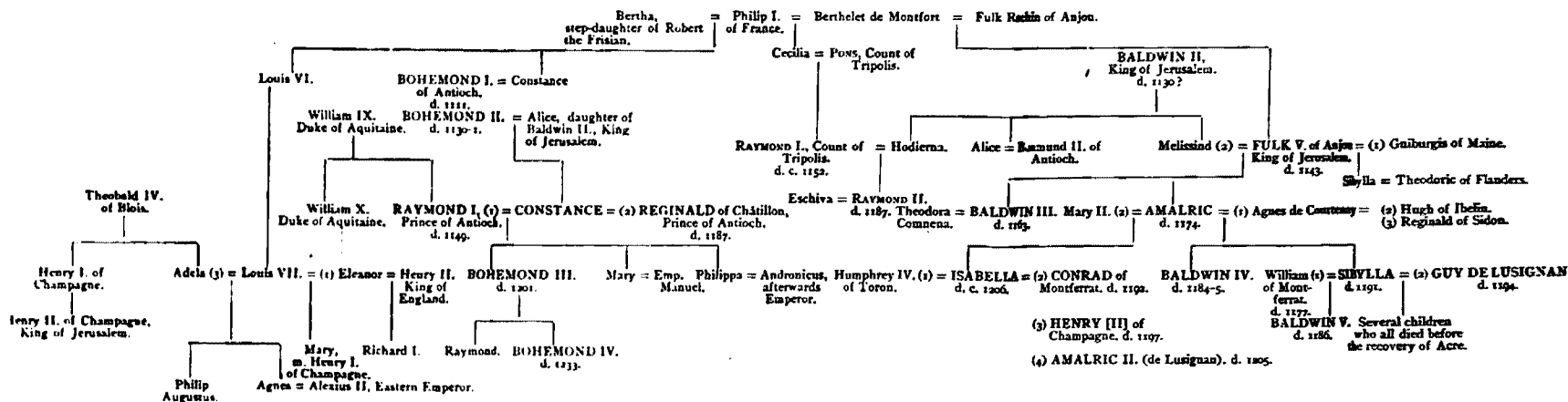
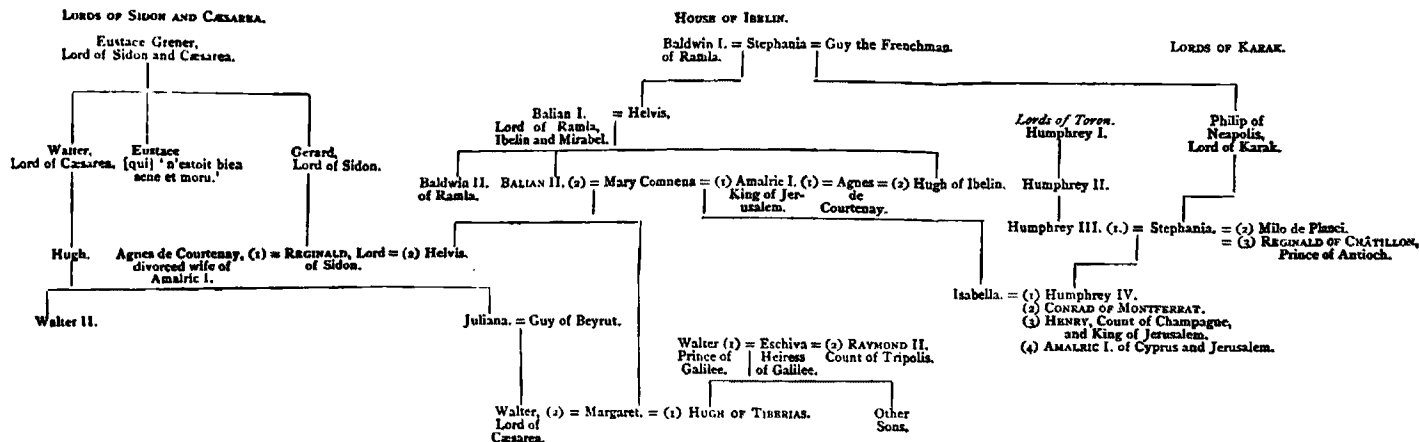
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